



Nation

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The Bear and the Child

A legend told by Joseph Guanish, Kawawachikamach

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Crees open "Quebec embassy"

By Boyce Richardson

It is amusing – in some circumstances one might call it slightly alarming – to observe how effortlessly the leaders of the Cree Nation, as the eight Cree villages in Quebec now style themselves, have switched their policy towards the nationalist claims of the province of Quebec.

In the 1990s, the Crees published a groundbreaking legal study of Quebec claims to sovereignty, called *Sovereign Injustice*, in which one of the major arguments advanced against Quebec separatism was that the province of Quebec, whatever else it may be, cannot claim to be a nation without the agreement of the many non-French-speaking people who live in the province. Of these, the Indigenous people are probably the most important, for they have an authentic claim to be the owners of much of the territory of Quebec. The study did not deny there may be a French-Canadian nation, but it did deny that this nation is contiguous with the province of Quebec.

I wrote a popular version of this immense legalistic study, called *Never Without Consent*, which also rested largely upon this argument that Quebec in itself is not a nation, and never will be until the separatist agenda of a minority of the French-speaking population has been embraced by the province's substantial non-French population. The most extreme expression of this view is the argument tendered by opponents of separatism that if Quebec does separate, the only land it would be free to take out of Canada would be the narrow strip along the St. Lawrence River, with which they first entered the Canadian Confederation – the rest, including the vast reaches of the north, being lands to which Crees and others have priority claim.

This became an article of faith with the Cree leadership during the years of their maximum opposition to the repeated damming and dyking of their territory by the Quebec government and its agencies.

But magically, it seemed, this article of faith was abandoned when immense amounts of money were dangled before the leadership, embodied in the so-called *Paix des Braves* in 2002. This is a new arrange-

ment with Quebec under which the Crees have agreed to carry out sections of the original 1975 James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, that Quebec has just never bothered to implement, through, it seems, as much as anything, sheer indifference. In future, Quebec will pay the Crees to fulfil these unfulfilled promises themselves – a startling new interpretation of the meaning of treaty promises.

Suddenly, Ted Moses and other Cree leaders were proclaiming from the rooftops – or should that be treetops or hilltops? – that they were making a nation-to-nation deal with Quebec. Since Quebec, in the Cree policies, was not a nation, how could this be?

Simple. Merely by saying so. Overnight, without, so far as I know, any debate among the people, Quebec was recognized as a nation by the Crees.

This recognition has been taken a step further recently by the opening in Quebec City of what the Crees call an "Embassy to the Nation of Quebec" on December 3. Although the Crees of Quebec are not a numerically significant element in the Canadian political scene, they have established a leading role for themselves in the minds of non-Indigenous people, largely through their once-staunch defence of their great, wild rivers against the overwhelming power of mindless technology. Thus, their establishment of what they call an "embassy" in what they now call the "Nation of Quebec", will not be particularly welcomed by those forces across Canada which believe that a separate Quebec, torn from the bosom of Canada, will not be in the best interests of this country, nor of this continent.

Among those who have in the past argued that the Crees should be treated decently by authorities that historically treated them with contempt, this sudden switch of allegiance will be added to an earlier switch, when supporters of a free-running, wild Rupert River equally suddenly found themselves side-swiped as the Crees decided to sell their great river to Hydro-Québec.

Politics, as the old saying goes, does indeed make strange bedfellows.

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Beating Murphy's Law, northern style

By Sonny Orr



The first pipes froze today, and it's not yet Christmas. It wasn't a fun sight, water and ice everywhere, but it was bound to happen sooner or later. Murphy's Law works double time up here, in the far north. In many ways, winter is a fun time. Most of my memories involve having fun, but that's what kids did, never mind the cold and come in only when there was no energy left to stay outside. But for adults, it's an entirely different story.

In my many years on this planet, I have witnessed some strange things during the winter months, like cold blustery blizzards. Back in the day, storms were ordinary events, lasting for weeks at a time. Storms could blow up right in your face without warning and so it happened to our boss one night. We were working the winter shift for a now-defunct airline, starting at 5:30am and ending when the last plane shutdown.

It was our boss's night out, so he took off with the company truck. Our gang woke up to a snow bomb and no truck to take us to work. Grumbling and complaining, we walked to work. The boss was nowhere in sight and the same for the truck. Soon, a complete snow-suited goggled operator showed up to tell us he uncovered our truck under a 12-foot snowdrift in the middle of the road with his bulldozer. Meanwhile, the boss, who had recovered enough to dig his porch free of packed snow, assured us that he was still alive.

Another time, while waiting out a storm way the heck up north, the local airline agent advised us after the storm blew itself out that she had checked out the runway, which was nice and smooth. According to her garbled message on the HF radio (bush radio to those in the know), it was good to go. After putting all the passengers on board the Twin Otter, we took off over the treeless landscape of northwestern Quebec.

Sure enough, the runway looked good enough to land and after lining up for final approach, we quickly got absorbed in the fluffiest snow in the world and the plane

slowed so fast and yet smoothly, that the seatbelts cut right into our abdomens as we doubled over with all the negative gravity force. Popping open the back door, I jumped into chest-high powder and literally swam around in the snow to secure the brace for the tail. Of course, all the heavy equipment in town was broken down at that time, and the runway couldn't be cleared. But the Inuit quickly used toboggans from the local co-op and lashed them to the wheels. Thus the plane taxied out and actually could takeoff way beyond the limits of the runway, riding on a mix of old and new technology, and beating Murphy at his game.

During the same time, the weather quickly changed to include some freezing rain to its concoction and the aircraft was quickly coated in ice, making it impossible to fly. The captain whipped out a little handheld scraper and asked me to start working at clearing the plane free. What about the deicer, I asked. Doesn't work up north said the pilot, so I placed the deicer pump down and went out to do the impossible.

An hour later and having scraped off a few patches here and there, I went to see if deicing really wouldn't work in the north. I discovered the little pump, which I put down in haste, was sitting on top of the small oil heater. It looked like it was going to expand and explode, so I went out to spray the plane down. The heated alcohol mixture literally blew out the nozzle and the plane was quickly deiced with the hot vapours. I ran back in to tell the captain and he said, let me write that down in my logbook and recommend heating the deicer before spraying. Murphy was beat again.

Today, there are so many contraptions out there to beat Murphy's Law during winter months that eventually, none of them will work in Canada's frozen north. Sometimes, it's pure luck that helps out in the end. Have a nice winter and holiday cheer to keep you going. Signing off from the frozen north...

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Standing up to Section 74

Algonquins of Barriere Lake hit Parliament Hill to protest a "puppet council"

By Amy German

About 100 Algonquins from Barriere Lake and many of their supporters took to the streets of Ottawa on December 13 to once again show to Canada that they will not accept Section 74 of the Indian Act being imposed on their community.

Back in the spring, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) assigned Bob Norton to act as an election official to the community to impose nominations and a subsequent election for a chief and council under Section 74 of the Indian Act.

At every attempt that Norton made to enter the small community, he was met with protest, barricades and a flat-out refusal by an almost unanimous community that said it would not concede to an INAC-run election in favour of its own customary system.

According to community representative Tony Wawatie, the Elders have always selected their chief through their own methods, not by vote and this has been done since time immemorial.

On August 12, Norton conducted an election outside of the community, at a nearby airstrip about 45 km away. The community was not aware of this at the time, as Norton had advertised that an election would be held in the afternoon, but he instead began counting votes that had come from outside of the community.

Before noon, Norton had his list for a new band council by acclamation. He then had someone sneak into the community at 6:00 am the following morning and post the acclamation list at the community clinic.

Casey Ratt, who was voted in as the community's chief, sent a letter of resignation immediately in protest of INAC's refusal to accept the community's traditional chief selection system and instead impose Section 74.

The handful of band councillors elected by acclamation however have since been acting in the place of chief

and council and, according to Wawatie, working with INAC and their hired third-party managers to carry out INAC's "dirty work."

"There is no chief, there is no leadership selection happening, it is just a council recognized by INAC. This means nothing to us because they don't represent the majority of the community that lives there," said Wawatie.



According to Wawatie, what has caused a major disturbance in Barriere Lake recently is that Quebec's Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones has put up \$1 million for home renovations within the community. But, many residents see this money as a "carrot on a stick," for what Wawatie calls the "puppet council." Residents believe it is geared at undermining previous agreements already signed with the federal and provincial governments, which they now are refusing to honour.

In 1991, the community signed a historic trilateral agreement with both governments that would have seen the residents hooked up to a nearby Hydro grid and would have also guaranteed them hundreds of millions of dollars in resource revenue sharing from the natural resource development on their traditional territory. This agreement has yet to be honoured in any capacity.

While INAC imposed third-party managers, the consulting firm of Lemieux Nolet, are taking care of the

administration of this fund along with the council in place,

Wawatie said nearly the entire community is outraged by this move.

"We need to look at the breakdown of how this \$1 million is going to be spent because a lot of it is going to go to administration for the third-party managers. INAC is spending about \$600,000 for Lemieux Nolet to administer this fund annually. I would imagine that the \$600,000 is going to come out of the one million," said Wawatie.

In lieu of INAC supporting only the council that they have put in place, Wawatie said the community has met with Assembly of First Nations' Chief Shawn Atleo to see if INAC and the AFN could work together to perform a fact-finding mission to show just how much of the community supports the council. While this request has been conveyed to INAC via Atleo, so far no response has been received.

Upon requesting a meeting with Pierre Corbeil, Quebec's Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, to discuss the recent funding, Wawatie said his people were told that the department would only deal with INAC's council.

Despite their Ottawa protest and the support of many organizations and politicians on December 13, the people of Barriere Lake were met with silence from the office of John Duncan, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Community residents however will continue on their fight to see Section 74 repealed and get their treaty honoured.

"If you do the math, offering us \$1 million while they extract over roughly \$100 million a year from our territory is not fair, it's unjust and it's illegal. They have walked away from this agreement that they signed and we will not put up with it," said Wawatie.



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Chief Norman Hardisty Jr., Charlie Cheechoo, Deputy Chief,
Council & Staff

Be-“witched”, bothered and bewildered

news

An Oujé-Bougoumou family speaks out over their daughter's sweat lodge being dismantled

By Amy German

The parents of Lana Wapachee, whose sweat lodge was recently dismantled in Oujé-Bougoumou, feel both insulted and persecuted by their community, chief and council after having the lodge, along with any other form of traditional spirituality, banned from the community.

Just weeks ago, Oujé-Bougoumou residents not only banned all traditional Native spiritual practices within the community, they also sent community members to the home of Lana Wapachee to dismantle a sweat lodge that her neighbour Redfern Mianscum had built in her yard.

The community had passed a bylaw almost two months prior that paved the road for the dismantling of the sweat lodge after Christians in the community circulated a petition to have it removed and then brought it to chief and council.

“I was a councillor for 15 years in this community and I didn’t agree with the way they set it up and the way this was done. It was done by petition and the petition only had 16 names on it,” said Glen Wapachee, Lana’s father.

Glen, who is the brother of Chief Louise Wapachee, said he felt that his sister had really not done her homework when it came to passing the bylaw and the community meetings that came prior to it on October 27-29.

According to Glen’s wife Margaret, during the six-hour-long community debate over the sweat lodge, she and her family were attacked, insulted and “verbally abused” by other community members.

“What really upset me was that our chief allowed people to use verbal abuse in our community assembly. It lasted six hours, and people were yelling and screaming at us saying all kinds of bad things,” said Margaret Wapachee.

At that, Margaret said when it came time to vote on the resolution, she said the chief and two other councillors raised their hands to vote prior to posing the question. She feels the chief not



only allowed the community to abuse them during the meeting, but led the vote at the meeting so that the resolution would pass.

Meanwhile Margaret said all she and her family were trying to tell the community was that the sweat lodge had been put up to aid in her family’s healing. After her daughter Lana split from her partner, Margaret said her two grandsons had become firekeepers for the sweat lodge and it was helping to heal their wounds as a family and also helping others in the community.

During the meeting, Margaret said some family members who tried to defend the sweat lodge were not even allowed to speak. She said her other daughter, Patricia, was told to step away from the microphone when she approached it to speak and that the chief halted the meeting when one of her brothers, Wally Wapachee, tried to speak.

Margaret said the family had also called members of local radio into the meeting to ensure that it would be subject to public record, the journalists were however thrown out of the meeting by the chief and council.

When it came to the dismantling of the sweat lodge in early December, Margaret Wapachee said once again her

family was subject to abuse as her two grandsons who were standing by to witness the event were harassed by those handling the dismantling.

“There were two people really abusing the youth. They told them to respect their Elders and were yelling at them. But my grandsons were just standing there and not doing anything,” said Margaret.

Glen Wapachee said now that the family has taken some time to reflect on what has taken place within their community, they have come to the conclusion that seeking legal council is absolutely necessary. They are doing so as they believe that their human rights have been violated.

They are also looking to appeal to the general public and said the family has been in touch with various media groups, including some in Montreal.

“I think it is the point of view of everybody that we don’t want to just lie back and let anything happen to us. We have gone ahead and asked people in key places to help us and we are already getting lawyers,” said Glen Wapachee.

Despite numerous attempts to get a response from Chief Louise Wapachee and her council, *the Nation’s* calls were not returned and no statement has been made on their behalf by press time.

Auditor General says Canada is still failing First Nations

Canada's Auditor General, Shelia Fraser, is calling on federal and provincial governments to change the way they deal with First Nations communities as the quality of life on most reserves is dramatically worse than in non-Native communities.

After spending a decade auditing the performance of governmental departments in regards to First Nations communities, Fraser has declared that the present system requires a revamp as it is simply not working.

Citing 29 separate audits that directly or indirectly dealt with First Nations communities, Fraser said very little has changed in the last decades in terms of social and living conditions.

According to APTN News, Fraser said, "The conditions on many reserves remain poor and progress is slow. Some communities are making significant progress, but they are the exception rather than the rule. Services on reserves have not kept pace with services in municipal governments... The federal government has not been identifying and funding comparable services on reserves in any systemic fashion."

Fraser's findings critiquing the government's treatment of First Nations communities is expected out in May. Already she has said the report will look at how reporting requirements for Aboriginal communities is much more

excessive than communities of the same size and highlight government failures in education, water quality, housing and child and family services.

Shannen's Dream lives on

The Assembly of First Nations unanimously passed a resolution to support Shannen's Dream, an organization whose sole goal is to end educational apartheid for First Nations school children across Canada.

The organization was formed in the wake of Shannen Koostachin's passing last May to commemorate her fight to get a school in her community of Attawapiskat for the children who were attending classes in substandard conditions.

Since it was Koostachin's dream that every First Nations child across the country get to go to a well-funded school like the ones for the general population, a movement has been spreading across Canada to keep her dream alive and continue her fight.

On December 15, the AFN chiefs unanimously passed a resolution in support of Shannen's Dream in front of an audience that included a crowd of youth from the Kitigan Zibi First Nation.

Just one day early, National Grand Chief Shawn Atleo spoke about Koostachin in an address he made to chiefs at a gathering in Gatineau, Quebec.

"Let's honour the dream of Shannen Koostachin from Attawapiskat. A



teenager and a passionate advocate of fairness in education. A brave young woman who looked the Minister of Indian Affairs in the eye and said softly, but with irresistible conviction, 'My... community... deserves... a... school!'

"Tragically, we lost Shannen this year. But her legacy lives on in Shannen's Dream, a campaign to struggle for better First Nations education for all our children. And, to the boys and girls of Attawapiskat, she has left a powerful personal legacy.

"Shannen got them a school!"

For more info on Shannen's Dream, go to: www.fncfcs.com/shannensdream

Comic strip courtesy of Tundra Comics: www.tundracomics.com



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The Bear and the Child

**A legend told by Joseph Guanish,
Kawawachikamach**

translated by Brian Webb

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I will tell the legend of the bear. I heard my grandmother tell this one – the one about the bear that lived with a child. This was how she told it.

One time, a black bear began feeling lonely and wished for a human child to care for. He began wandering around through the forest. With his mind and thoughts, the bear could influence things to happen and make people do exactly what he wanted.

At a camp, a mother and her son decided to go gather berries. The two of them left and headed to an area where there had been a forest fire years before since there were sure to be many berries there. As the bear wandered around, he noticed the woman and her young son picking berries in the distance.

The bear stopped and gazed at them. He made a wish on the mother. "I wish for you to leave your child because you will look for another patch of berries." His ponderings always seemed to work for him. As soon as he thought this, the woman said, "Son, stay here and play. There are too many mosquitoes over there. I'll go there by myself and pick berries so I can be quick." The mother left. The bear had envisioned all this to happen.

The mother disappeared from sight and the bear approached the little boy. As he got closer, he wished that the boy would not fear him. Of course, the bear's thoughts influenced the boy. The little boy was frightened at first but the bear allowed the boy to sit on his shoulders. He wished for the boy to stop crying. He pretended to play with the little boy. Suddenly, the bear bolted and ran far with the boy still sitting on his back. The bear ran far and the boy was having a great time as he held on.

When they got far, the bear stopped. He began eating berries and so did the boy. The little boy forgot about his mother.

After picking berries, the mother went back for her son. She could not find him. She kept calling and calling for him. From the spot where she had left her son, she noticed the tracks of a bear. Her mind raced with images of her son being killed by the bear. "The bear must've run off with my little son's body." She returned back to camp and told her husband the bad news.



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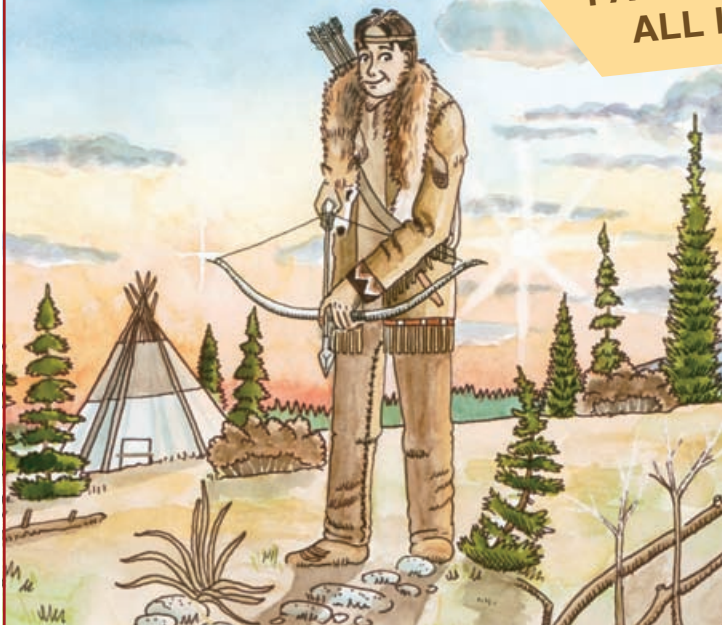
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Mukash on spirituality

The former Grand Chief wades into Oujé-Bougoumou's ongoing issues with spirituality

By Amy German

Since this fall, Oujé-Bougoumou has been in an uproar over spirituality, recently banning all forms of Native traditional practices within their community.

Having expressed a desire to share his feelings with all of Eeyou Istchee, the Nation decided to grant Matthew Mukash an interview on the issue.

The Nation: Oujé-Bougoumou has banned the practices of sweat lodges, powwows and rain dances because the community claims to have been founded in the Christian values of their Elders and previous leadership as they see these activities are a means to communicate with the spirit world and have roots in shamanism. What are your thoughts on this?

Matthew Mukash: This is a community issue. The Oujé-Bougoumou decision indeed has wide-ranging implications, but I believe it will settle itself over time.

The real issue is for the Cree Nation to come together and seriously look at not only the issue in question today but also about how much our people have suffered as a result of the impact of colonization. And as far as Eeyou spirituality and religion are concerned the leadership, internal and external to the Cree Nation, of all Christian denominations that have entered our society and our own spiritual leaders need to come together to have a very serious talk. It has been done elsewhere in the world. Without this, the divisions that exist today over these issues within our families, our communities and within our nation will continue to escalate.

TN: So, how would this dialogue begin? Where would it begin?

MM: First of all, like all human societies in the world, Eeyou society is evolving. Along this path of evolution we are likely to continue to face many challenges as we have in the past and in the present. Without these challenges, we are not likely to grow, as we should. Whatever happens at any given time is all

part of our growing up, so-to-speak. This is something we need to accept as we move forward in our evolution toward our destiny as a people.

There are realities that we first need to accept as a people, and they are: Christianity and Eeyou spirituality are here to stay. There are no two ways about it. What we need is a certain level of tolerance that must exist among the followers of various Christian denominations and of our people who chose the Old Ways as part of their personal development. This should be goal; otherwise, our nation will invariably be weakened to a great extent by internal conflict and unrest. It is already happening.

I think there is an opportunity for peaceful coexistence and silence is not the answer.

“WHAT MY ELDERS TEACH ME IS THAT UNIVERSAL ENERGY IS LIKE A CAR BATTERY – YOU NEED THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ENERGY TO GENERATE POWER. SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT IS THE SAME...”

TN: What about the Oujé-Bougoumou resolution? Do you agree that this is a gross violation of basic human rights?

MM: Historically, many questions have arisen in various circles regarding the continued practice of traditional ceremonies and rituals, which were outlawed by the governments in the past, but are now protected by provincial, national and international human-rights



laws. There are varying views depending with whom you talk to. Even our own Elders are divided on the issue. Thus, to effectively and adequately address the issue of Eeyou spirituality is not going to be an easy task; it could take years before we see results.

Within our nation there are many questions raised. Some are about basic human rights of conscience and religion,

the rights of Cree individuals to choose their own spiritual path, the rights of legal entities such as the Cree Board of Health and Niskamoon, federal and provincial programs and services, even Cree local governments – that provide funding for traditional activities, which include powwows and spiritual ceremonies. The right of self-government and self-determination is also at issue. These are only a few of the important

matters that need to be addressed within the Cree Nation and, if possible, outside of the Canadian justice system.

This is why I say that the Cree Nation should come together to agree on the principle of tolerance that should exist within our society on Eeyou spirituality and religion. This, in my view, is essential for our peaceful coexistence and positive growth. The truth is that Native spiritual practices and Christianity are not going to go away. We have to learn to walk side-by-side

TN: What can you tell us about the Old Ways of our Ancestors? What do people need to know to make peace with it?

MM: First of all, many people are afraid of the Old Ways because of the spiritual wars that happened in the past. This is a very legitimate concern, in my view. But like our Elders often tell us there are two sides of everything.

Human history is tainted with conflict and wars resulting from abuse of what our Elders call the “gifts of humanity”, which includes power and authority, technology, knowledge and wisdom, including spirituality and religion, which are often used as instruments of colonization to dominate and control others. Such conflicts are still ongoing today in the world, and often risk triggering a global conflict that could threaten world peace. Now, many spiritual leaders in the world are saying that the answer to world peace and, thus, human destiny rests with the knowledge and wisdom of Indigenous peoples of the world.

So, my question is: What will we have to offer the world if we let go and bury the spiritual knowledge and wisdom of our Ancestors?

TN: Can you tell us what your views are on the spiritual knowledge and wisdom of the Ancestors? Why is it important to protect the ceremonies?

MM: Eeyou spiritual ceremonies, as I understand them, are meant to honour life and make it better. This is the good way. The opposite or abuse of such sacred ceremonies is to dishonour and ruin life. The whole point of choosing



the traditional path of spirituality is to know and honour yourself, your gifts and purpose in life, and to honour the reason you were created Eeyou. With it, you learn to be able to discern the fine line between the good and the dark side, not only of spirituality, but also of life. This understanding is only possible, once you truly know yourself. And to know oneself well is to know Chissamanitou, which literally translates into the “Great Spirit”. The Old Ways teach you how to find your true self and live your purpose in life.

I grew up with very traditional people, and I’ve gone through many storms of life in my lifetime.

Although I have always understood them, I didn’t attend to them until much later, in my mid-30s. I took that extra step to conquer my fear. From then on I’ve seen many things. I’ve seen people come out of depression resulting from personal loss, the effects of residential school, violence and abuse of all forms, and alcohol and drug addiction. I’ve seen women who were told by doctors they will never have children, going to ceremonies for help and within a few months, they were pregnant. Now, they have grandchildren. I’ve seen people who had cancer getting healed and now they live healthy lives. My friend’s mother was diagnosed with a terminal disease and was given six months to a year to live. They made a commitment to attend a Sun Dance ceremony to pray for their mom. She went on to enjoyed another five years of life. These are only few of the good things that I’ve seen over the years about the proper use of traditional knowledge and wisdom.

TN: What is your stand with respect to Christianity?

MM: I have a different understanding of what it means to be Christian, and I



know I may be accused of blasphemy for saying this. To be Christian does not necessarily mean to belong to a certain denomination of the Christian faith. To me, it means to search for the meaning of and follow the Sacred Law that governs the Universe and all its realms. It is the universal law that says that the sun will rise in the East each morning at a certain time, and that if understood and followed will connect you to the Life Force, which is the underlying universal truth, the story of which is told in the spiritual teachings and sacred writings of the past. Ultimately, how you find this truth is to look within, and I believe that this is the message Jesus Christ and the historical prophets and spiritual teachers of the world taught us to seek and live by.

Our Ancestors understood and knew this long before the arrival of Europeans. This fact is evidenced by the existence of stories and legends that have been passed on for generations, which by the way are still very strong in Whapmagoostui. By knowing and accepting that our Ancestors were guided by this knowledge and wisdom, gives rise to the growth of personal, communal and national pride and dignity. This, I believe, is the direction we need to go as a nation.

TN: Many Christian denominations condemn Native spirituality because they believe it is evil or demonic. How do you respond to this?

MM: I don't believe that all denominations do so. Why I say this, is because in my wife's hometown, the Abenaki First Nation of Odanak, the Catholic Church invites an Elder to do a traditional Pipe Ceremony during Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. Traditional peo-

ple and Catholics commune as one in prayer. It's an extremely heart-warming experience and I've seen this many times. Besides, many people of the Church go to sweat lodges and other ceremonies, as do some of our leaders.

The first problem is the definition of "evil" or "devil" no matter how you look at it. I know the Bible has its own defini-

"...THE CREE NATION SHOULD COME TOGETHER TO AGREE ON THE PRINCIPLE OF TOLERANCE THAT SHOULD EXIST WITHIN OUR SOCIETY ON EYYOU SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION. THIS, IN MY VIEW, IS ESSENTIAL FOR OUR PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE AND POSITIVE GROWTH."

tion as do other sacred writings, and they differ to a certain extent. But the question still remains how do we discern evil from that which is not? Who is the devil? I once asked this question to an Elder for whom I have high regard and respect. His response was something like: the concept of "evil" or the "devil" has to be universal to be an element of truth. That means that human concept of evil or devil is not the same as that of other species in the world. If you were to ask a fish, for instance, in any body of water on earth who the devil is, you've probably get the response that humanity fits their concept because we constantly threaten the fish nation with our pollution and harvest. I think the same goes for all other species.

What my Elders teach me is that universal energy is like a car battery – you need the positive and negative energy to generate power. Spiritual development

is the same; you're likely to face challenges at any level in your spiritual development as with the physical, emotional and mental aspects of being human. Positive and negative forces will be breathing down your neck, so-to-speak, to make sure you walk in balance. The goal of an individual's spiritual growth therefore is understand and master

both, an essential element in conquering one's fear. A whole new insight of life can be found in the absence of fear, to that I can attest.

TN: As a previous leader, with all that has happened in the past and what is happening today, what message do you have for the Cree people?

MM: I'll say it again, the answer to all of this is tolerance and acceptance of each other regardless of our faith, and this is very difficult to do. I've gone through many phases in my lifetime and the most challenging was to get out of this bind of fear of many things, including our own spirituality and going to hell. But I'm beyond that now. Having done so is like waking up to a sunny day after a relentless storm. It's like walking into the Light. All it takes is that extra step – and that extra step is conquering your fear and embracing acceptance.

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Youth environmental scholarships

Earth Day Canada wants to bankroll your education no matter what you are studying

By Amy German

If you are graduating from high school and have a real passion for the environment and have taken steps to show the world just how much you care, Earth Day Canada might just have something special for you.

Earth Day Canada (EDC) is currently seeking graduating high school students as applicants for its Toyota Earth Day Scholarship Program, which recognizes 20 students from across Canada every year by giving them \$5000 towards their education.

"We really wanted to develop some strong environmental leaders across the country and the thing that sets our scholarship program apart is that even though it is an environmental scholarship program, we will provide funds to any graduating high school student, regardless as to where they chose to go on for their post-secondary school education," said EDC president Jed Goldberg.

In awarding students scholarships to go into the fields of their choice, Goldberg said EDC can then develop environmental leaders in every sector by sustaining their opportunity to pursue an education.

"We already know that they have a strong passion for the environment and our feeling is if we are able to give them a little leg up in developing their education and their work opportunities, they will continue their environmental work. This means we will have another leader out there who may be in nursing or maybe in a vocational school and that is what we need," said Goldberg.

In the last eight years, EDC, in conjunction with Toyota Canada and the Toyota Canada Foundation, has awarded 120 students with \$600,000 in scholarships and the scholarship has become the best-recognized environmental entrance scholarship in the country.

The kinds of students that the program is looking for are those who have done some substantial environmental work in their communities. By that token, the work could be anything that the students have done within their own



school or neighbourhoods, like working with younger children or being a leader in developing some new environmental program. Or it could be any other kind of work for the environment that they have done.

To qualify for the award, the student needs to be graduating from high school and going on to an accredited post-secondary school or institution. Students only need to fill out the application on EDC's website and then provide the appropriate documentation.

If the student is one of the lucky 20 selected, EDC will then send the \$5000 to the institution that the student will be attending to go towards their education in any capacity, provided that it's paid for through the school. Recipients can use this award to go towards their tuition, residence fees, and books or even for the tools they might require for a vocational course.

One thing to keep in mind is just because a student lives in an urban setting, it doesn't mean that they would automatically be more favoured to receive the scholarship over a student from a rural location. Many students from remote areas have received scholarships in the past.

"We have given out tons of awards to people from small communities and we really encourage people from remote communities to apply because it's probably more difficult for those students to get scholarships and recognition for the work they have done," said Goldberg.

In that respect, Goldberg said he would be "absolutely thrilled" to see a student from one of the Aboriginal communities serviced by this magazine be honoured with the award this year.

Of course, this specific scholarship isn't the only kind of fund for the environment available to individuals through EDC. There is a bevy of different kinds of funds that individuals can apply for to take action on the environment in their communities. There are also awards available for individuals of all age groups who have made significant contributions to preserving the environment in their communities as well as information on what people can do and educational materials that are available, through Earth Day's various programs and services.

To apply for the Toyota Earth Day Scholarship Program get your application in by January 31, 2011. Applications for this award and others are available at: www.earthday.ca/pub.

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An independent assessment

Time is running out for residential school survivors to file for independent assessments

By Amy German

While the federal government may have started to pay out common experience payments to residential school survivors in 2007, the end grows near for those who may still want to file for the Independent Assessment Process (IAP). Members of the Indian Residential Schools Adjudication Secretariat from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada have already been travelling to Eeyou Istchee to spread their message and they will be visiting more communities come January.

"With the IAP, some people have heard of it, while others know little about it. So, we wanted to make sure that community members are aware of the IAP, the fact that it is separate from the common experience money," said Peter Rinaldi from the Secretariat.

While many may have filed for the Common Experience Payment (CEP), Rinaldi said what most people don't understand is that the IAP is something specific that survivors need to file for and at that, may require assistance in doing so.

The Secretariat's team has already visited Eastmain and Wemindji and will be looking to make it to all the other Cree communities beginning in January to give out information on the IAP and also to hand out individual packets that survivors can use to apply for the funds.

Their mission is simply to engage with those who have been to residential school and to encourage them to apply to this program so that they can receive more money for the suffering they have endured.

According to Rinaldi, the IAP is for those who went to residential school and suffered abuse that was physical, sexual or psychological. This abuse could have been at the hands of a teacher, a school employee or even another student as it was the responsibility of those who worked there to ensure the safety of the students and stop any wrongdoing.

Comparatively the funds made available for the CEP, according to Rinaldi,



were more about the government's acknowledgement of the experiences that everyone went through in residential school, such as being taken away from their families and suffering horrible living conditions.

"Part of the message that we want to get out to the communities, is that it is important to share your experience, to put it down on paper and put it into the process," said Rinaldi.

All of the information that is acquired by the Secretariat is kept confidential and the only individuals who will see it are the complainant's legal counsel and the adjudicators who assess the complaint and decide what kind of compensation the complainant is entitled to.

Though it's not necessary, Rinaldi said the Secretariat recommends that those looking to file do so with the aid of legal counsel as the packages they have to fill out can be complicated. An additional 15% of the settlement will be paid out by the Secretariat for the complainant's legal fees. It is important however to verify with legal counsel prior to engagement as not every lawyer charges the same fees.

If some individuals don't feel comfortable working with a lawyer, they can work through the documents themselves.

How much each individual will get from filing for the IAP is based on a special question matrix that was developed for this process.

"With the matrix, a grid has been created which allows the adjudicators – who sit in the room with the claimants and hear their experiences – to grade the level of harm that the claimants may have received. The intent of the matrix is that it was designed to be as fair and as equitable to everybody going through the process," said Rinaldi.

Rinaldi added that the type of matrix they are using was developed around the typical process for this kind of scenario and what it does is takes people's experience and grades it against the different aspects of that matrix and comes up with a number. He gave the example of getting 44, 66 or 88 questions out of 100 within the assessment matrix and how each number of questions answered would total a different award calculated.

Most importantly however, Rinaldi said the deadline to apply for an IAP is September 19, 2012, so time is running out.

"Many people feel that this is something that only happened to them and that is part of the outreach, to get out there and tell them that it is not just you, it is not just something you should hide from. If you want to deal with this, it has happened to others and it is something important to try and deal with because it is part of the healing process for them," said Rinaldi.

For more information, call 1-877-635-2648 or go to www.irsad-sapi.gc.ca

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 in Eeyou Istchee a
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mûs^w NA *Alces alces* Moose;
Original

mwâk^w NA *Gavia immer* Common

nâpemek^w NA male fish; poisson
mâle = **nâpemes**

nâpemes NA *idem*

nâpemisk^w NA male beaver; castor
mâle

nâpesik^w [na:pɛ:ssik^w] NA male
merganser; harle mâle

âpâsin [na:psɛ:fɛn] NA drake;

The animals and the plants

Kevin Brousseau discusses his latest publication on the flora and fauna of Eeyou Istchee

By Amy German

Kevin Brousseau's newest book, *Trilingual Lexicon of the Fauna and Flora of lynu Asciy*, is truly one of a kind and possibly one you should own.

At the age of 18, several years before he started his double major in Linguistics and Religion at Concordia University, Brousseau began compiling lists of Cree words and their definitions simply because he wanted to learn Cree. Almost a decade later in 2007, he wound up self-publishing *The Practical lynu Dictionary*, which is a bi-directional, bilingual dictionary and made so that English words could be translated into Cree.

"The real drive behind it was that my whole family, a lot of my cousins and siblings, were not spoken to in Cree when we were young and so we didn't learn it. There were a lot of kids in Val d'Or who didn't know how to speak Cree. It bothered me that there weren't any tools for us to learn it and our parents weren't making the effort to speak it to us either" said Brousseau.

Brousseau, the product of a Cree mother from Waswanipi and a French-Canadian father, grew up in the Val d'Or area with little resources to learn the language. After much persistence with his mother and a few years of liv-

ing with his grandmother, he finally learned the language.

Since releasing his first book, Brousseau said the dictionary remains a hobby that he works on from time-to-time between writing projects but it has never been his fulltime focus. His obsession with the language however remains ongoing.

Last year, Brousseau put out his second book, *lynu Names for Your Baby*, that featured 130 ancestral Cree names and the Cree forms of adopted foreign names.

"We have a lot of names like this in our communities – George pronounced Goge, Henry pronounced Hendli or Hendlish, Abraham pronounced Ebrehem," said Brousseau.

His latest work, *Trilingual Lexicon of the Fauna and Flora of lynu Asciy*, was published by the Cree Research and Development Institute (CRDI) this fall.

Brousseau said the project took two years and started out as a Cree Forest Lexicon because in Cree the terms for fauna and flora are very sparse in Cree dictionaries and often-times incorrect or contradictory from one dictionary to another.

"Even within dictionaries you will find samples and they will both be in the same letter on a different page and they will actually give a different definition for that same word to identify a different bird," said Brousseau.





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The idea was also to cement these terms into record before the Elders who have this information died along with the words.

Over a two-year period, Brousseau interviewed over 50 Elders for the project so that the pronunciations and spellings of each term would be as precise as possible. Not only did he interview Cree Elders, he also spoke to Anishinabe from Lac Simon and Pikogan because the Cree language is related to Anishinabe. Atikamekw Elders from Obedjiwan were also included because, according to Brousseau, the language they speak is about the oldest form of Cree in the country.

"It was interesting to speak to them because a lot of the word forms that we have in Waswanipi are different from everywhere else in James Bay. Once I interviewed the Elders from Obedjiwan I realized that people in Waswanipi have a dialect link with them," said Brousseau.

There are three language sections – Cree, French and English – to his book on fauna and flora. At the back of the book, Brousseau did his best to include photos of every bird that he had a name for in Cree.

Through the CRDI in Waswanipi, 300 copies of the book were printed with 150 being mailed out to Cree institutions and businesses within the Cree territory. Brousseau and the CRDI are charging only the printing costs, \$10, for those who would like to receive a copy and the profits will go into a fund to print more books.

"The book is amazing because nothing has ever been done like this before with all of the pictures. You can take it in the field and look at the birds and the ducks and the tents where people do their kills and have the pictures to look at to identify them," said Brousseau.

To order a copy, contact Brousseau at nikan-books@gmx.com



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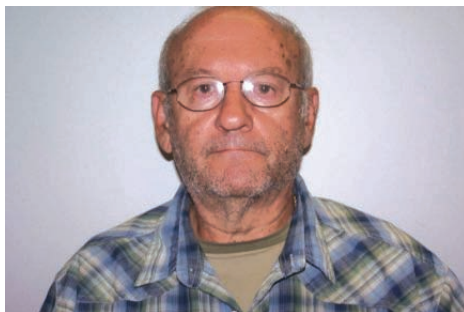


wâpikayuw

Police on trail of pedophile who once lived in Eeyou Istchee

Police in Lévis, Quebec, are appealing to the general population for information about possible sex crimes against children that may have been committed by Yvon Beaudet, a former health-care worker who has lived in several First Nations communities in Quebec, including Eeyou Istchee.

The 63-year-old man is currently facing charges involving a boy in Lévis during a three-year-period, from 1972 to 1975, when the child was between 7 and 10 years old. Beaudet had already been convicted of similar offenses in



1991, for which he served a prison term of 12 months.

Lévis police have contacted Aboriginal communities in the James Bay and North Shore regions in an effort to find other possible victims. Beaudet now lives in Bécancour.

According to Lévis police spokesperson Alain Gelly, the investigation indi-

cates Beaudet could have victimized other children during his movements in various regions of the province.

"The file we are handling now deals with incidents that happened during the 1970s," said Gelly. "At this time, victims were more likely to stay silent when they faced this kind of behaviour. We now know that when one person speaks out about events of this nature that happened several decades ago, that this could encourage other potential victims to come forward."

Beaudet is about 1.7 metres tall, weighs 96 kilograms, with a pale complexion and grey hair. Anyone with information about this man should contact Sergeant-Detective Christian Bédard at 418-835-8255, extension 8374.

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**Merry Christmas and
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Proud of being Native

My name is Destiny Chescappio. I was born in Maniwaki, Quebec, where my mother Grace Brennan is originally from, an Algonquin reserve called Kitiganzibi. My father's name is James Chescappio. He was born in Schefferville, Quebec and later moved to a new reservation called Kawawachikamach, where the population is close to 900.

I now live in Kawawachikamach. I moved here with my parents and my sister when I was 17 months old. I go to the Jimmy Sandy Memorial School, which is the school in the community.

I first started traditional dancing when I was 7 years old. In 2005, my community Kawawachikamach hosted the Elders gathering. Other Native communities in Quebec were there to witness and tell stories about different

Native traditions and cultures. Many Elders sang with the traditional drum.

John Schecanapish, a Naskapi Elder, gave me my Native name ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ, Wapindao, which means coming on dawn young lady. A special ceremony took place when I danced by myself while the Elder John Schecanapish sang and played the traditional drum. Other Elders later joined in and danced along with me.

Walking out ceremonies also took place with babies. Branches were placed at the entrance for them to walk out the teepee for the first time. The toddlers were dressed up in hunter outfits. As the ceremony came to close, a bunch of geese flew above the ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ and flew towards the south and on that evening a feast was held inside the ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ, and on that same night the northern lights shone and danced above the ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ

with the most spectacular colors that I have ever seen.

With that, I want to say that I'm proud to be an Algonquin and a Naskapi.

Destiny Chescappio
Kawawachikamach

Remembering Smally

Here are a few words touching Smally Petawabano, as I found him when he was Chief in 1969.

"Smally was the chief when I first went up to Mistassini in 1969. He was running the band out of a tiny, run-down hut, and like many other chiefs across Canada at that time, he was a transitional figure, somewhere between the old hunters and the newly educated youth. He could remember the days when to pick up supplies they went south in canoes to meet the train at the railhead when it was first built across the north – a long journey in those days. He became one of the English-speaking young leaders who had to carry the Cree response to the James Bay hydro project: and he was undoubtedly the more effective for being so closely connected to the traditional way of life. He gave me a set of handmade Cree snowshoes that I cherished for many years; but when I recently had to sell my home, I donated them to the Odawa Native Friendship Centre in Ottawa, who were more than happy to have them."

Boyce Richardson
Ottawa

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Photos: page 1-Aboriginal Day 2010 CICC team, Cora DiConti CICC 2010 Aboriginal Day princess, Sewing lesson during Intercultural Friendship Week, 14th Friendship Golf Tournament – having a great time!, Strategic planning session. page 2-Helping to prepare the macoushan, Youth Gala: Laureats for 2010, Dynamix Sept: Dynamix Teambuilding with the local schools, CICC Relay for life team 2010, 14th Friendship Golf Tournament Co-Chairs and Partners.



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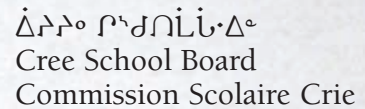
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Happy New Year from all of
us at the Cree School Board.

Abraham Jolly
Director General

30 *the Nation* December 31, 2010 www.nationnews.ca

By Lyle Stewart

Energizer

If you're like me, you probably find it hard to roll out of bed at this time of year, when the days are so short and the natural light so weak. It's a SAD state of affairs, you could say. During the past few weeks, predictably, it's become increasingly difficult to generate the energy required to get to work on time, and then actually perform some work, much less brave the crazed crowds at the malls after work to finish off the annual Santa shopping chores.

Indeed, if I obeyed my inner child I'd be spending most days on the couch cocooned in a pile of blankets cuddling a bucket of microwave popcorn as I zoned out to the fake fireplace channel that, mysteriously, always reappears in my 500-channel universe at this time of year.

Either way, even when I'm trying to avoid expending much energy, I'm consuming an awful lot of it. Without the power that lets me meditate on my televised fire, or for my corn-popping microwave, or the electric heat in my living room, or for everything else we take for granted in our energy-guzzling northern climate, I guess I'd be huddled in a pile of furs on a bed of spruce boughs in front of a real fire. Not an unattractive notion, certainly. At least until the inevitable trek out into the dark frozen wasteland to gather more fuel for the fire.

Most years, debates over energy can be counted on to dominate a good proportion of news coverage in Quebec. Another good bet is that the Cree of Eeyou Istchee will find themselves at the centre of wrenching decisions over how, or whether, to develop those energy resources.

This year was no exception. From the additional hydro-electricity generated by the diversion of the Rupert River, to the painfully slow progress on developing the abundant potential of Cree wind energy, or, finally, how to deal with

an aggressive uranium-mining industry that enjoys the Quebec government's political and financial support in its lucrative quest to supply the global nuclear-power industry, the Cree of James Bay once again seemed to face a disproportionate amount of responsibility over how to deal with these difficult questions.

This responsibility is always accompanied by intense pressure to cede to powerful corporate and political interests and accept the exploitation of the natural resources of Eeyou Istchee, even more so for energy-generating resources. This reality needs to be acknowledged even over what must seem to most like the obvious choice made in the recent decision by the Mistissini Band Council to oppose the development of a uranium mine in the nearby Otish Mountains.

As the Nation has documented over the year, the Strateco proposal for the Matoush uranium mine project is fraught with vague generalities, wishful thinking and, to put it generously, incomplete research. The risks of uranium mining are conclusively and exhaustively documented. But Strateco didn't come close to alleviating concerns over its proven dangers.

Nor is it only the Cree and their territory threatened by the mine's long-term collateral damage in this case. The proposed operation is at the headwaters of Quebec's major waterways, including those that drain west to James Bay and south to the St. Lawrence. The horrifying and permanent consequences of just the smallest miscalculation of a future uranium operation at this site should shame those politicians – Chibougamau Mayor Manon Cyr, for example – who stubbornly refuse to acknowledge any downside whatsoever of the uranium mining industry.

Both the mayor and the company have made it clear that they are not giving up on the project. Their common refrain, curiously almost word for word, is that the project's backers simply didn't adequately explain the details. The insinuation is pretty clear: those who oppose the mine just don't understand it. Maybe if the forces promoting the Matoush mine used shorter words, those difficult people who have the most to lose might finally grasp its wisdom....

One obvious lesson of all this is that the project is far from dead. The Cree and the environmental movement should be prepared for a long battle and longer odds given the power and determination of those in favour of establishing a uranium mining industry in Quebec.

This issue could actually go a long way to helping heal some of the wounds inflicted by the deep divisions over resource development projects in Eeyou Istchee over the past decade. At the same time, it's one that's not likely to go away. Even many environmentalists are now saying that nuclear energy is an inevitable choice in the effort to reduce dependence on greenhouse-gas producing resources in the fight against climate change.

Whatever the larger issues, those who depend on the immediate environment have no choice but to look to their own long-term interests. Does the economic development promised by corporations and governments outweigh the high probability of serious impacts on the health of the land and the people who live there?

It's enough to shake one out of their couch-potato lethargy, turn off the TV and head outside for some fresh air, no matter the temperature. Sounds like a good idea to try in 2011. Happy New Year!

JOB OFFER • OFFRE D'EMPLOI

The CREE JOBS PARTNERSHIP (CJP) is a not-for-profit organization made up of three Cree entities sharing the same objectives and mandates; that is to train and create sustainable jobs for Cree people. These include CREECO, CHRD, and CSB.

The CJP signed a two year agreement with the provincial and federal governments committing to the creation of 301 sustainable jobs for Crees.

The CJP is currently searching for a dynamic and enthusiastic individual to fill a contractual position as:

FINANCE OFFICER

Based in Mistissini, Quebec

Summary of Role

Under the authority and direction of the CJP Project Coordinator, the CJP Project Finance Officer assists the CJP Project Coordinator in implementing and administering the financial, administration, and reporting policies and procedures established for the CJPP. The Officer implements these procedures to ensure compliance with the project and the funder's policies and guidelines.

Qualifications

- Vocational diploma in accounting combined with one (1) to three (3) years of experience in accounting;
- Knowledge of spreadsheets and accounting software applications;
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills;
- Ability to work independently and within a team environment;
- Written knowledge of English;
- Fluency in English and Cree;
- Fluency in French is considered an asset.

The CJPP is prepared to offer a competitive salary and excellent employment benefits to its successful candidate.

If interested, please submit your resume and letter to:

CJP Project Coordinator

Cree Job Partnership

187B Main Street, Mistissini, Quebec G0W 1C0

Fax (418) 923 2050

By email bella.loon@ccdc.qc.ca

For more information, you can contact Bella P. Loon at: (office) 418 923 3888 ext 44. The position is open to both men and women. The CJP thanks all the candidates for their interest, but will contact only those selected for an interview.

The CJP is currently searching for a dynamic and enthusiastic individual to fill a contractual position as a:

JOB COACH

Summary of Role

Under the authority and direct supervision of the CJP Project Coordinator, the Job Coach: provides support to the CJPP employers, provides support to CJPP trainees, provides reports on these support and liaison activities with CJPP employers and trainees, and carries out key parts of the CJPP communication strategy with CJPP employers / trainees and with Cree Communities.

Qualifications

- A relevant vocational training diploma or equivalent experience
- At least five (5) years of relevant experience in the construction, catering / facility management industry, including relevant management/project management experience;
- Demonstrated positive experience working as an autonomous, self-reliant, self-starting worker;
- An appropriate knowledge of Excel, Word;
- Good interpersonal, communication and motivation skills;
- Ability to communicate effectively, in both the written and verbal form;
- Knowledge of the First Nations employment and training field;
- Good ability to speak, write, and comprehend English and French;
- Certificate in a construction trade or other pertinent trade is an asset;
- Knowledge of the Cree language is an asset;

If interested, please submit your resume and letter to:

CJP Project Coordinator

187B Main Street, Mistissini, Quebec G0W 1C0

Fax (418) 923-2050

By Email: bella.loon@ccdc.qc.ca

For more information please contact Carly Gagnon at: 418-923-3888 or: cgagnon@ccdc.qc.ca



UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

Merry Christmas to one and all

by Xavier Kataquapit

Christmas is a stressful time of the year. It has always been that way for me. From the time I was a child I have more or less endured the coming and going of Christmas. Back home in Attawapiskat in the 1980s, when I was a kid, Christmas revolved around a lot of alcohol, drugs and general tragedy. My family did its best to make this time of the year happy but it was never easy.

On one hand, there was all the hype about what we should be getting for Christmas in terms of the latest new toys and gadgets and this information came to us through the television and local store. The music started early and the combination of the anxiety of watching the Christmas high build and such joyful music made things really kind of surreal and crazy.

Like all of the kids my age, I put on a pasted smile and did my best to climb on the Christmas high express, but I also knew that it was mostly just a bunch of baloney and the climax of this ride would be terrible. This is the time of the year when people use the excuse of Christmas to party hardy. Sure, in many cases families meet in get-togethers around good food, they open gifts around the Christmas tree and some might head off to church. Still, for most kids on remote First Nations, this is a time of year that is a fantasy. It is not real. The sentiments are thin and masking, and most of the celebration has nothing to do with making little kids happy. It has to do with getting drunk and high.

I have seen too much tragedy at Christmas. People try to buy into this fake reality that somehow buying a lot of presents and giving and receiving them is going to make somebody happy. For many poverty-stricken families in First Nations, children for the most part end up disappointed because they did not get their dream gift. On top of that, there is so much stress and anxiety leading to Christmas Day that most people seem to just end up running around in circles trying to figure out where the happy place is.

My experience has shown me that in communities and families that don't have huge alcohol- and drug-abuse issues, people squeeze by but still they have to deal with a lot of pressure in meeting all kinds of deadlines that mostly revolve around duty and spending money. Even the most sane people go kind of crazy this time of the year and spend more money than they have trying to keep up with everybody else and making somebody happy with a gift. In the worst-case scenarios where communities and families are not functioning well, mostly due to poverty, alcohol and drugs, this time of the year is dangerous and tragic.

Perhaps in many cases, the best Christmas gift adults could give their children would be to just take a break from all the insanity and honestly ask themselves if they have a problem with alcohol or drugs. Visit www.aa.org online and go to the "Is A.A. For You?" link to their questionnaire to find out if you have a problem with alcohol or drugs. If you find that your honest answers to these questions obviously point to the fact that you have a problem with alcohol or drugs then maybe the best gift you could give yourself and your family and friends is to come out of denial and reach out for help. You can start with your nearest Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous group in your area or contact your local drug-and-alcohol-addiction centre. It's not hard to find as this information is in your local phone book or can be found through a quick search online. Many First Nations have Native drug-and-alcohol-abuse workers who you can talk to.

This could be your best Christmas ever or it could be another hellish merry-go-round. I have paid an enormous cost to be able to give these words as a gift to you, so Merry Christmas.

CLASSIFIEDS

BIRTHDAYS

Congratulations to Jonathan Wapachee and Alexsa Jolly on the birth of their baby boy Craig Alexavier, who was born on December 4th, 2010. A little brother for Daliah! Bless you all! From Jessica and Jedaiah

BIRTHDAYS

We would like to wish a happy 83rd birthday to our Dad and Grandfather Teddy Cookish on December 15th, 2010. We love you so much! Enjoy your day daddy (joumshoom) from your daughter Alice and your grandchildren June, Georgina, Russell, George & Gavin. XOX Merry Christmas!!!

I would like to wish a happy 10th birthday to my beautiful daughter Chloe Amillia Helen Mark whose birthday is on Dec. 15th. Also a happy birthday wish goes out to my best friend/cousin Melanie Moore in Waswanipi on Dec 18th, to my friend Jessica Cooper on Dec. 27th, to my cousin Ryan Moore on December 28th and to my wonderful sister Tracy Mark on January 3rd, 2011. Enjoy your birthdays everybody! With much love, from Amy xoxo

Happy belated 3rd birthday to Marquis Jacob, whose birthday was on December 11th Anjabweh you're no longer a baby boy! I miss you and I love you boysh, from your cousin A.J. in Val-d'Or xoxo

Wishing a happy birthday to Larry JR Salt, who celebrated his birthday on December 14th, from Olivia Couchees and your little guy Logan C. Salt. We love you very much! xoxoxoxoxoxo

We would like to wish a happy birthday to Trevor Sam on December 16th and to Selena Weapenicappo on December 24th, 2010. Both of you enjoy your b-days! From: Stella, Clifford & Celine Weapenicappo. P.S. we love you!

We would like to wish our mom Stella Sam-

Weapenicappo from Eastmain a Happy birthday on December 16th, 2010. We love you, Mom! Thanks for everything and enjoy your day because, you deserve it. From: Selena and Celine

Happy belated 2nd birthday wishes go out to Leerona Precious Kathleen on December 9th, 2010! It seems like just yesterday that your mom brought you home from the hospital. How time flies! I wish I was there to celebrate your birthday with you but I will make it up to you. I'm sending you a big hug and a big kiss all the way from Ottawa! Love you always! From Sabrina

Though these birthday wishes may be late, please know that you are all loved and appreciated very much: to Stan (Dec. 19th); to a beloved Mother, Granny, Great-Granny and Great-great Granny Agnes (Dec. 10, her 88th birthday!) and last but certainly not the least to my sis Irene (Nov. 28th). May you all be blessed with good health, love, joy and happiness in 2011!! With much love, from Eva (Louttit), Eastmain.

HOLIDAY MESSAGES

I would like to wish a Merry Christmas to my dad Alfred Nineoclock back home in Chisasibi! I miss you dad and am sorry I couldn't be there for Christmas. I hope your holiday season will be a good one. Also to all of my siblings, especially my twin, I wish you a Merry Christmas. To my one and only aunt VALERIE Nineoclock thanks for everything and thanks for always being there for me when I needed you the most! Merry Christmas to all the NINEOCLOCKS! Merry Christmas to all the METABIES!!

Merry Christmas to Willard and Eliza Sam and the family in Chisasibi from your annoying neighbour! LOL Merry Christmas to Hilary and Dennis Moar and the boys!

Have a safe Christmas and take care... from your annoying cousin lol Heather

Merry Christmas to my buddies Valerie Stephen and Jeanelle, also to their brothers in Waskaganish. Have a safe one! From: Heather

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Network: They'll help you find kids who have run away or disappeared.

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(www.kidshelpphone.ca)

Youth helpline:

1-800-263-2266 (www.teljeunes.com)

Parent helpline:

1-800-361-5085 (www.parenthelpline.ca)

Drugs: help and reference:

1-800-265-2626 (www.droguereference.qc.ca)

Gambling: help and reference: 1-800-265-2626 (www.info-reference.qc.ca)

S.O.S. Conjugal Violence:

1-800-363-9010 (www.sosviolenceconjugale.com)

Health and Sexuality resources center:

1-888-855-7432 (Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm)

(www.criss.org)

Gay Helpline:

1-888-505-1010 (Monday to Friday, 8 am to 3 am and Saturday-Sunday, 11 am to 3 am)

The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal:

1-866-403-4688. (www.nwsm.info)

Suicide Action Québec:

1-866-277-3553

Residential School Survivors:

A 24 hour toll-free crisis line is available to provide immediate emotional assistance and can be reached 24-hours a day, seven days a week: 1-866-925-4419. Other support services and information for survivors is available on the AFN website at: <http://www.afn.ca/residentialschools/resources.html>

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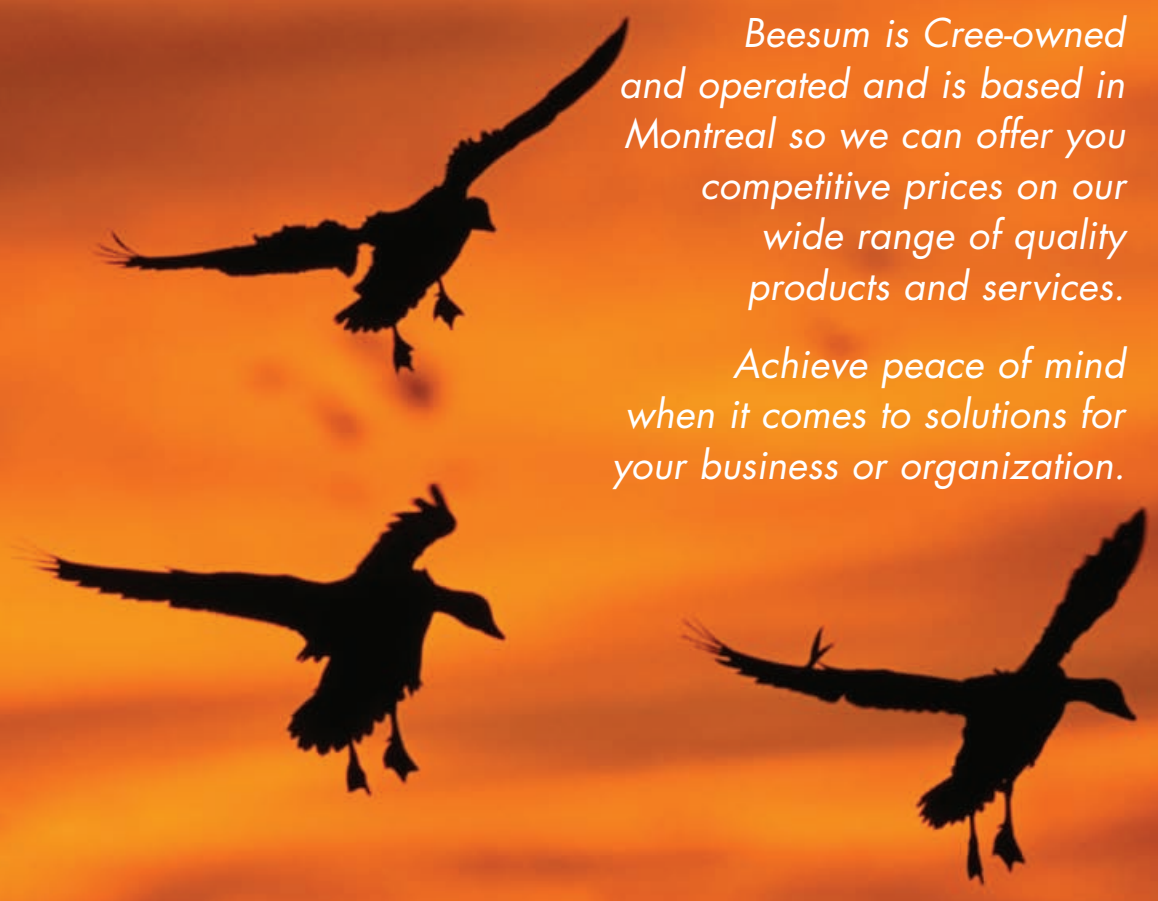
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Did you know?

Three black silhouettes of birds, likely geese, are shown in flight against a warm, orange-hued sunset sky. One bird is in the upper left, another in the lower left, and a third in the lower right, all with wings spread.

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